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## THE MASSACHUSETTS BUREAU OF STATISTICS<sup>1</sup>

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The Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor was the first of its kind to be established in this country, and, I believe, in the world. Its duties were prescribed in the act providing for its establishment, passed by the legislature of 1869, to be "to collect, assort, systematize and present in annual reports to the legislature, statistical details relating to all departments of labor in the Commonwealth, especially in its relations to the commercial, industrial, social, educational and sanitary condition of the laboring classes, and to the permanent prosperity of the productive industry of the Commonwealth."

For many years the Bureau's energies were directed to investigating and making reports upon questions having an intimate relationship with what we commonly understand as the problem of capital and labor. It was during this earlier epoch that the Bureau was given its great renown by the late Carroll D. Wright, whom we have all come to esteem and venerate as one of the greatest of American statisticians.

The first formal extension of the self-imposed limitations of the functions of the Massachusetts bureau came in 1889, when it was directed by the legislature to collect annually statistics of manufactures, a work which, while it may properly be included in the term "labor statistics," was, nevertheless, taken up from a somewhat different point of view. The gathering of those statistics has been continued annually since the date mentioned, and several of the state bureaus have followed the example of Massachusetts in this respect.

At the present time there are three important fields of statistical work which come under the jurisdiction of this bureau according to the law prescribing its duties, but according to other laws are collected and published by other departments, viz., statistics of industrial accidents and employment of children now under the super-

<sup>1</sup>This report has necessarily been abbreviated by the omission of several paragraphs.

vision of the district police, and the vital statistics of births, deaths, marriages, divorces, etc., under the supervision of the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

In 1909 the name of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor was changed to the Bureau of Statistics.

The regular permanent work of the bureau at the present time is distributed among four distinct divisions:

The labor division.

The manufactures division.

The municipal division.

The free employment offices division.

During the period of taking and compiling the census, a fifth, the census division, is organized.

The labor division collects, tabulates and analyzes material for the annual report on the statistics of labor, which is devoted to statistics of strikes and lockouts, changes in rates of wages and hours of labor, labor organizations, the extent of employment of the organized wageworkers, prevailing rates of wages and trade agreements. This division also conducts special investigations and makes inquiries into matters of current interest, the results of which are published in the Labor Bulletin.

The appropriation made by the legislature for the general statistical work of the bureau for 1909 was \$59,570. The aggregate appropriations for all the work of the department was \$80,570. The number of persons on the payrolls of the bureau in December, 1909, exclusive of the director and chief clerk, was fifty-eight, of whom forty are permanently and three temporarily employed in connection with the general statistical work of the bureau, while fifteen are employed permanently in the free employment offices.

In closing this survey of the work of the bureau I should like to read an extract from an address delivered by Hon. E. Dana Durand, Director of the United States Census, before the American Statistical Association, at New York, on December 29, 1909, as the United States census of Massachusetts, the largest single supervisor's district in the country, will be, as has been the custom during the censuses of 1880, 1890, and 1900, under the supervision of the director of this bureau:

"In connection with the changes made in the population schedule with reference to the return of occupations, attention may be called

to the changes in the instructions with regard to reporting the gainful occupations of children. The widespread agitation as to child labor makes it desirable that the statistics on this subject should be placed on a more scientific basis than has been done in past censuses. Important as it is that the abuses of child labor should be done away with, it is nevertheless essential that the extent of child labor in this country should not be exaggerated. The danger of such exaggeration arises principally in connection with those children who work for their own parents. A very large proportion of the children of the country, and particularly of the children of farmers, are employed more or less of the time outside of school hours and during school vacations in assisting their parents on the farm, in the shop or store or in housework. To distinguish between those whose employment in such a way is sufficiently extensive to justify reporting them as having a gainful occupation, and those whose work is too unimportant or discontinuous to justify classifying them as gainful workers, is very difficult. It seemed desirable to adopt a somewhat arbitrary rule and to instruct enumerators to report children who work for their parents as gainfully occupied only in case they work for at least half of the year. This instruction may possibly result in reducing the number of children reported as gainfully occupied, though this is by no means certain; but it seems far better to have a definite basis for classification than to leave it, under vague instructions, to the variable judgment of enumerators.

"I may also note that in the case of children who work for their parents on farms, which is perhaps the most common form of child labor, we will instruct the enumerators to designate them as 'farm laborers, home farm,' in order to distinguish them from those who work for other employers, who will be designated as 'working out.'"